'Elimination' of Castro Held Discussed in '62

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The Rockefeller commission has obtained minutes of a 1962 meeting showing that high Kennedy administration officials discussed the possible assassination of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, according to sources.

One source who has seen the minutes said the subject was immediately dismissed. But two sources say a memo was written two days later by an assistant to then-Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara directing the Central Intelligence Agency to develop contingency plans for the possible assassination of the Cuban leader.

That memo was withdrawn immediately, one source said. But he said subsequent U.S.-sponsored plots were made against Castro's life.

The memo, which dealt with a variety of subjects, does not use the word "assassination," according to a source who had seen it, relying instead on more general terms such as "elimination."

But the source said the memo clearly provided authority for drawing up contingency plans for an assassination.

The sources, who declined to be identified, said minutes of the Aug. 10, 1962, meeting show it was attended by McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk; John A. McCone, CIA director, and McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's adviser for national security affairs.

The memo was written by McNamara assistant Maj. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale.

Reached by phone, McNamara and Lansdale said they had no recollection of the memo or the meeting.

The minutes describe a meeting of a special group known as Operation Mongoose, which approved all CIA covert activities against the Cstro regime, the source said. A fifth member, then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, was absent, according to the sources.

The minutes do not make clear whether a specific plan was discussed or whether approval or disapproval for a plot against Castro was given.